

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5333

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 2198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO FR

SUBJ: GSICARD VISIT TO MOROCCO

REF: A. RABAT 2184; B. RABAT 2188

1. SUMMARY. FRENCH PRESIDENT RECEIVED EXCEPTIONALLY WARM
TREATMENT DURING MAY 3-6 VISIT TO MOROCCO. SUBSTANTIVE
CONTENT OF VISIT WAS LARGELY OF ECONOMIC NATURE (REFTEL B)
AND LITTLE NEW EMERGED OF POLITICAL INTEREST.
Giscard reiterated French position on Middle East, noted
French interest in Mediterranean developments, and continued
neutral French line on Spanish Sahara. King Hassan accepted
invitation to visit France in March 1976. Visit appears to
have been designed primarily to set new upbeat tone in Franco-
Moroccan relations and to underscore that political and
economic differences now minimal. Both sides clearly
view visit as great success. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING VISITED MOROCCO
MAY 3-6, SPENDING MUCH TIME IN PUBLIC EYE. KING HASSAN
AND GOM PULLED OUT ALL STOPS TO ASSURE WARM AND IMPRESSIVE
WELCOME. FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, MAINLY IN RABAT AND FES,
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INCLUDED SIGNAL HONOR OF PRESIDENT'S BEING FIRST CHRISTIAN

DIGNITARY ADMITTED INTO SANCTUARY OF MOULAY IDRIS, PATRON SAINT OF FES. SEMI-OFFICIAL MEDIA DEVOTED MAJOR ATTENTION TO ATMOSPHERICS, DRAWING ON ABUNDANT MATERIAL IN KING'S STAGE-SETTING PRESS AND RADIO INTERVIEWS BEFORE GISCARD'S ARRIVAL AND IN NUMEROUS AMICABLE PRONOUNCEMENTS BY BOTH GISCARD AND KING DURING EVENT ITSELF.

3. VISIT PRODUCED WARM, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT VAGUE, COMMUNIQUE. ISSUES WERE ADDRESSED MORE SPECIFICALLY ELSEWHERE, NOTABLY IN GISCARD'S MAY 6 PRESS CONFERENCE. SUBSTANTIVE DEVELOPMENTS WERE PRIMARILY IN ECONOMIC REALM (REFTEL B) WITH LITTLE NEW POLITICAL GROUND BROKEN. HIGHLIGHTS OF LATTER FOLLOW:

A. MIDDLE EAST: THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF ANY CHANGE IN FRENCH POSITION OUTLINED BY FON MIN SAUVAGNARGUES DURING HIS RECENT PREPARATORY VISIT (RABAT 1741). PROGRESS TOWARD A SOLUTION, GISCARD SAID IN PRESS CONFERENCE, CAN COME ONLY THROUGH GENEVA CONFERENCE OR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO NEW ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS. FRANCE IS NOT NOW INVOLVED IN EITHER, AND ENVISAGES UNDERTAKING OF NO RPT NO NEW INITIATIVES ON MIDDLE EAST, BUT WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA CONFERENCE IF RESUMED. FOR HIS PART, KING PRAISED "COURAGEOUS" FRENCH POSITION.

B. NORTH AFRICA AND MEDITERRANEAN: GISCARD SAID HIS VISITS TO ALGERIA AND MOROCCO AND FUTURE TRIP TO TUNISIA REFLECT FRENCH DESIRE TO UPDATE HISTORIC TIES IN VIEW OF "CHANGES OF LAST FEW YEARS" AND TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS OF MEDITERRANEAN STATES. THESE STATES HAVE NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESSED "PROBLEM OF THE MEDITERRANEAN", HE REMARKED, ADDING THAT FRENCH INTEREST HAS RESULTED IN "NORMAL" RE-DEPLOYMENT OF FRENCH NAVAL FORCES TO MED. GISCARD ALSO NOTED THAT COASTAL STATES HAVE NOT DEALT DIRECTLY WITH OTHER MAJOR QUESTIONS SUCH AS POLLUTION AND MARITIME RIGHTS. IN ADDITION, HE COMMENTED, FRENCH INTERESTED IN (UNSPECIFIED) JOINT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNDERTAKINGS.

C. SAHARA: GOM HAS SOUGHT TO CAST CONSISTENT FIRM FRENCH NEUTRALITY ON SAHARA ISSUE IN MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT POSSIBLE.
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"NOTHING COULD BE MORE HEARTWARMING," SAID KING, THAN FRENCH ATTITUDE WHEN SAHARA PROBLEM WAS PUT BEFORE THE UN. GISCARD, HOWEVER, IN FACT CONTINUED WITH BALANCED FRENCH LINE BETWEEN SPANISH AND MOROCCANS ON ISSUE. HE NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, FRANCE'S SUPPORT FOR UN RESOLUTION ASKING FOR ICIJ ADVISORY OPINION BUT ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT EVEN SPAIN, BY ABSTAINING IN UNGA VOTE, HAD NOT ACTIVELY OPPOSED RECOURSE TO ICIJ. FRANCE, GISCARD SAID, STILL HOPES TO SEE DIRECT DIALOGUE

BETWEEN THE INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING THOSE WHOSE INTEREST STEMS FROM GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY (I.E. INCLUDING ALGERIA AS WELL AS MAURITANIA).

D. RETURN VISIT BY KING: COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCED THAT KING HASSAN HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT FRANCE IN MARCH, 1976, FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OF VISITS BY PRIME MINISTERS.

4. MOROCCAN POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS PLAYED GADFLY ROLE DURING VISIT. ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH FRENCH ATTENTION, OPPOSITION PRESS HAS GRUMBLED AT SOME LENGTH OVER WHAT IT HAS CHARACTERIZED AS LACK OF FRENCH FORTHCOMINGNESS ON SAHARA ISSUE AND HAS CONTINUED TO DRAW ATTENTION TO DIFFICULTIES IN MOROCCAN-EEC DIALOGUE.

5. COMMENT: IN SUM, VISIT SEEKS TO US TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO SET NEW UPBEAT TONE IN FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. STRIKINGLY WARM RECEPTION, LAVISH ARRANGEMENTS AND POSITIVE THRUST OF PUBLIC DECLARATIONS SERVED TO underscore THAT ALL IS NOW WELL IN LONG AND INTIMATE FRANCO-MOROCCAN RELATIONSHIP. Giscard's VISIT IN FACT CAME EARLY IN THE FIRST PERIOD SINCE MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE UNCLODED BY SERIOUS BILATERAL POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES. CONTENTIOUS ECONOMIC ISSUES LEFT OVER FROM COLONIAL ERA HAVE VERY LARGELY BEEN RESOLVED OVER PAST YEAR AND, DURING THE VISIT, BOTH SIDES ACTIVELY DOWNPLAYED ANY REMAINING DIFFERENCES. BOTH SIDES CLEARLY VIEW THE EVENT AS A MAJOR SUCCESS.

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